

# Take Care of Texas NEWS you can use

TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

MARCH 2010



## Texas Environmental Excellence Awards Celebrate Environmental Heroes

The Texas Environmental Excellence Awards celebrate the state's most outstanding waste reduction and pollution prevention projects. The awards honor citizens, communities, businesses, and organizations who go above and beyond to protect the Texas environment.

Ten diverse awards categories span public and private sectors: Agriculture, Civic/Nonprofit, Education, Government, Individual, Large Business/Nontechnical, Business/Technical and Innovative Technology, Small Business, Youth, and Water Conservation.

Winners are honored at an awards banquet during the TCEQ's annual Environmental Trade Fair and Conference. Hosted by the TCEQ commissioners with special recognition from Governor Rick Perry, this event will be held on May 5 at the Austin Convention Center. To purchase your ticket, visit [www.teea.org/banquet.htm](http://www.teea.org/banquet.htm) by April 26.

Don't forget to register for the TCEQ's Environmental Trade Fair and Conference! For more information, visit [www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/events/etfc/etf.html](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/events/etfc/etf.html).



## Texas Computer Recycling Program Releases First Year Results

The TCEQ announced first-year results on Texas' computer recycling program, which requires computer manufacturers that sell in Texas to offer consumers convenient, free recycling for their brands of computer equipment. From Jan. 1, 2009, through Dec. 31, 2009, 81 manufacturers representing 116 brands collected for reuse or recycling 12.4 million pounds of computer equipment in Texas.

The TCEQ encourages consumers to take advantage of these recycling opportunities in 2010. Recycling used computer equipment helps conserve the



reusable materials contained therein, including copper, lead, and steel. To learn how to recycle your computer, visit [www.texasrecyclescomputers.org](http://www.texasrecyclescomputers.org).

To help cities, counties, community groups, and schools promote computer-equipment recycling in newsletters and Web sites, you can download free print ads and Web banners at [www.texasrecyclescomputers.org](http://www.texasrecyclescomputers.org).

## TECO Westinghouse Installs Drought-Resistant Landscaping

Many Clean Texas members are not only setting environmental goals, but improving the appearance of their facility in the process. TECO Westinghouse Motor Company in Round Rock, a Clean Texas member that recently renewed at the silver level, demonstrates the success of innovative landscaping techniques on its 116-acre facility. When the 500,000 square-foot facility was built in 1973, the company maintained much of the original trees and grasslands. They have since relied heavily on xeriscaping by using native Texas plants and trees that are drought-resistant and adding various sages, cacti, and Bermuda grass.

In 2008, the front entrance was designed using a variety of Central Texas native plants including Cape Myrtle, Live Oak, and Mexican Oregano. The use of native plants and xeriscaping allows the company to water only a half acre of its 115.5-acre property. The company's two longhorn residents, Willie and Winchester (pictured), also do their share to keep the grassy areas looking pristine while grazing.

For more information on the Clean Texas Program, visit [www.cleantexas.org](http://www.cleantexas.org).



## Save the Date: National Drinking Water Week

National Drinking Water Week will take place May 2-8. Held annually, this event seeks to help communities recognize the importance of drinking water and the role it plays in our lives.

For more information and ways to participate, visit [www.awwa.org](http://www.awwa.org).



An environmental message brought to you by the Small Business and Environmental Assistance Division.

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## Save the Date for Rebates

If you purchase specific energy-efficient appliances between **April 16** and **April 25**, you may be eligible to receive a rebate by mail. Rebates are available for consumers who buy an eligible Energy Star appliance to replace the same type of old, working appliance. You can reserve an appliance rebate two weeks in advance of the purchase period, either by phone or online.

Energy Star appliances must meet rigorous energy efficiency and water efficiency standards set by the federal government. These appliances use less energy and less water than regular appliances, helping consumers save money each month on their utility bills.

Administered by the State Energy Conservation Office, the rebate program also offers an additional incentive when you recycle the old appliance. For more information, including a list of approved appliances and rebate amounts, visit <[www.secostimulus.org/rebate](http://www.secostimulus.org/rebate)>.



## National Environmental Education Week Helps Students Be Water and Energy Wise

National Environmental Education Week, scheduled for April 11–17, will use the theme “Be Water and Energy Wise.” This annual event seeks to increase the educational impact of Earth Day, offering a variety of classroom activities and lessons for grades K–12. The theme this year focuses on the importance of conserving both water and energy to protect the environment and save money.

To participate in National Environmental Education Week, educators can try the following suggestions:

- Incorporate environmental themes into daily lesson plans.
- Help students conduct an audit of water and energy use and develop a plan to improve conservation at school and at home.
- Visit a local nature center with your students.
- Set up a scavenger hunt on your school grounds.
- Take students on a tour of a power plant or water treatment facility to learn about local water or energy sources.

For more participation ideas, visit <[www.eeweek.org/water\\_and\\_energy\\_wise](http://www.eeweek.org/water_and_energy_wise)>.

## Get Involved with the Don't Mess with Texas Trash-Off



The 2010 Don't Mess with Texas Trash-Off will take place on Saturday, April 10. As part of this event, volunteers around the state will work

together to remove litter from roadsides, city parks, neighborhoods, and waterways.

This event is the single largest one-day cleanup event in the U.S. In 2009, more than 72,000 volunteers picked up 8 million pounds of litter to help keep our state beautiful.

For more information, visit <[www.ktb.org](http://www.ktb.org)>.

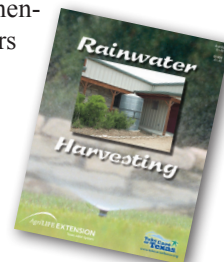
## Highlighted TCEQ Publications

**Rainwater Harvesting, GI-404**, offers comprehensive information to homeowners and landowners on building simple or complex systems to capture, store, and use rainwater to water their landscape plants.

**Preparation of a Drinking Water Survey Report, RG-428**, offers guidance to anyone who reports groundwater contamination in submitting a drinking water survey report.

**Water Supply Corporations: Frequently Asked Questions, GI-047**, explains what a Water Supply or Sewer Service Corporation is, how to join, and what the alternatives to joining are.

To order TCEQ publications, visit <[www.tceq.state.tx.us/publications](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/publications)>.



## Take Care of Texas Tips

### At Home

### Dry Your Clothes Efficiently

If your machine has a moisture sensor, use it to avoid over-drying your clothes. Dryers that operate an extra 15 minutes per load can cost you up to \$34 each year. Cleaning the lint filter after each cycle improves air circulation and can save you \$34 each year. Also consider air-drying clothes on clotheslines or drying racks.

### Around the Office Use Native Plants

Landscape your business's outdoor areas with native Texas plants. Plants that are native to Texas aren't just beautiful; they typically require lesser amounts of water, fertilizers, pesticides, and maintenance—saving time and money. The deep root systems of many native plants also increase the soil's capacity to store water and reduce runoff.



[www.takecareoftexas.org](http://www.takecareoftexas.org)